Mexican-oriented market enjoys successful first year

Officials hope that success will spread

BY KHALIL E. HACHEM
The Ann Arbor News

Nicolas Arreola measures success by the smiles on his customers' faces.

His Mexican market in downtown Ypsilanti – the only grocery store in the city – draws customers from throughout the area.

"We see new faces every day," said Arreola, who is celebrating a first year of success in Ypsilanti. "It's good for business."

The store's growth is being watched by more than just its owner.

Ypsilanti downtown officials hope that Arreola's success will spread because it is bringing more people downtown and the market is occupying a Michigan Avenue storefront that had been dark for years.

Arreola and his brother, Reyes, opened the store – and named it Dos Hermanos – Two Brothers – to provide a much needed service for a growing Hispanic community. Reyes Arreola manages a similar store in Adrian, and Nicolas Arreola and his wife, Yunuen, work at the Ypsilanti store.

The store includes a meat section, grocery, produce, baked goods and other mainly Mexican spices and food.

Arreola said the meat counter is the busiest part of the store, offering fresh meat, sausage and even chicken feet and pork skin.

The store also sells prepared food, including roasted chicken and barbecued lamb, pork and goat meat. The tamales are a hot item, Nicolas Arreola said. His plans include a deli in the future.

Arreola said he does not know how many Hispanics live in the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor area, but the community is growing, judging by the new faces he sees. While more people are visiting the

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Dos Hermanos

What: Mexican market in downtown Ypsilanti.

Where: 412 W. Michigan Ave.

Selection: The store includes a meat section, grocery, produce, baked goods, prepared food and other mainly Mexican spices and food.

Details: 734-487-8839.

LON HORWEDEL, THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Dos Hermanos Market owner Nicolas Arreola of Adrian and his son Chris, 14, in the store in downtown Ypsilanti recently.

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Building had been empty for years

store, they are buying less.

"The economy is bad, but I am not complaining," he said.

Dos Hermanos is the only Mexican market outside of Detroit, said Jesus Herrera, of Ann Arbor, who was shopping at the market with Cynthia Martinez this week.

"It's nice to have the store," Martinez said.

Downtown officials are also happy to have the market in the city because there are no other traditional groceries, although the Ypsilanti Food Co-Op is located on River Street and a few party stores sell some groceries.

Brian Vosburg, director of the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority, said the lack of a grocery store in the city surfaces in most conversations. The Mexican market fills a need in the city, he said.

Dos Hermanos is occupying a building that had been empty for a few years in an area that has not seen a lot of activity, Vosburg said. Other than Abe's Restaurant and an employment agency, most of the block on the north side of Michigan Avenue between Hamilton and Ballard streets has been vacant, he said.

"It's a great store," Vosburg said. "It adds another reason to shop in Ypsilanti."

Khalil E. Hachem can be reached at khachem@annarbornews.com or 734-482-3225.